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The CIA Subsidy Backlash

Espionage and intelligence in a variety of unpleasant forms is essential to the survival of this country; but accepting the harsh reality that an expensive secret agency is authorized to conduct mischief on an almost unlimited scale makes most ordinary citizens squeamish.

When the CIA's awkward devices for subsidizing student organization missions abroad were disclosed a few months ago, a great number of normally rational and practical persons were indignant. One of the most unexpected repercussions, however, is a bitter fight over the issue that popped up inside the American Political Society Assn., of all places. The APAS is an organization of nearly 10,000 professors, including some of the nation's most thoughtful scholars who are dedicated to the study and improvement of the democratic governmental process.

IT RAPIDLY DEVELOPED that even experts supposedly sophisticated in the affairs of government can panic in the ordinary, illogical, and emotional fashion of lesser-educated men. From a number of APSA throats rose an anguished cry that the CIA's secret subsidy of several public agencies that acted as funnels for its activities was a mortal blow at American idealism, innocence, and integrity.

The tempest was heightened by published reports that a non-profit social science organization called Operations and Policy Research, Inc. had received funds from private foundations revealed to be clandestine CIA conduits. The two principal officers of OPR were APSA executive director Evron Kirkpatrick and its treasurer, Max Kampelman.

APSA president Robert Dahl, a Yale University professor, hastily appointed a committee of former APSA presidents to investigate the possibility of a subterranean link between APSA and the CIA. A majority of members of the University of Hawaii political science department fired off an angry letter to their colleagues urging the resignation of Kirkpatrick and Kampelman if the taint of CIA was indeed upon them. Several American university professors—one of whom accepts research funds from the Teamsters Union—protested "the encroachment upon our integrity" supposedly perpetrated by Kirkpatrick and Kampelman.

THE TWO OFFICERS fought the attack

with the argument that they saw nothing improper in political scientists working with a legitimate arm of U. S. government—and that, in fact, the federal government would be in a peculiar situation if political scientists, who are supposed to know more about government than other men, refused to allow their special understanding to have any practical application.

After several weeks of acrimony, Dahl's blue-ribbon committee reported that it had found no connection between CIA and APSA and cleared the two officials of any impropriety. In fact, it went so far as to express "highest confidence" in the two officers.

The internal dimension will not be fully resolved until the APSA September convention, when the committee's report will be formally submitted for ratification. The protecting faction is still grumbling, but it now appears that a majority will accept the report.

THE SIGNIFICANCE of the episode lies in the fact that it betrays a startling readiness among some political scientists to ignore the practical facts of life. Many professors, for instance, are assisted by grants from the Defense and State Departments which, for all they know, might be funneled from the CIA budget. And the APSA itself has been involved in government studies and projects from the Truman administration forward.

Currently, for instance, President Johnson is utilizing APSA to help train Civil Service employees to understand the importance of Congress.